



The Affordable Care Act — *What it Means for You*



The Affordable Care Act, passed by Congress and signed into law by the President in March 2010, gives you better health security by putting into place comprehensive health insurance reforms that help to hold insurance companies accountable, lower health care costs, guarantee more choice, and enhance the quality of care for all Americans.

The Affordable Care Act builds a bridge to 2014 when a new competitive insurance marketplace will be established where millions of Americans and small businesses will be able to purchase affordable coverage, and have the same choices of insurance that members of Congress will have.

Between now and 2014, parts of the law are beginning to take effect, including new benefits, protections and cost savings.



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More Control for You and Your Family over Your Health Care

The Affordable Care Act includes new patient protections that give you greater control over your health care.

New Insurance Industry Reforms:

Starting on September 23, 2010, the new law ends some of the worst insurance company abuses and provides important new benefits for you and your family. The new law:

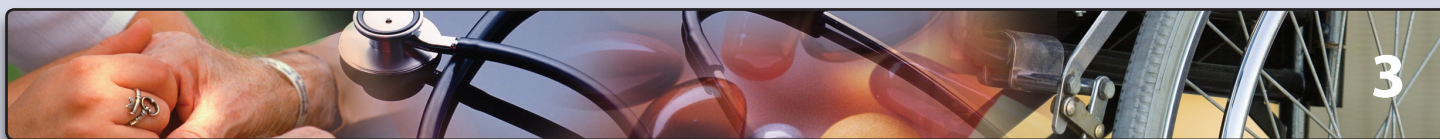
- Prohibits insurance companies from refusing coverage to or limiting the benefits of children (up to age 19) because of a pre-existing medical condition. This prohibition applies to all health plans offered by employers and when an individual purchases a new policy. In 2014, discriminating against all individuals who have a pre-existing condition will be prohibited.
- Prohibits all insurance plans from putting lifetime caps on the dollar amount that they will spend on benefits. In the past, patients with cancer or other chronic diseases ran the risk of hitting a lifetime cap and losing access to care. The law also restricts most insurance companies' use of low annual dollar limits on benefits. In 2014, annual limits will be eliminated.
- Prohibits all insurance plans from canceling your coverage because of an unintentional mistake on an application.
- Prohibits new insurance plans from denying coverage for needed care without a chance to appeal to an outside party.
- Delivers all of the new consumer protections with minimal impact on premiums – only 1% to 2%. Any impact on premiums will be offset by a number of provisions in the new law that save money for consumers and employers.



New Consumer Protections:

In addition, for new plans purchased on or after September 23, 2010, the new law:

- Requires plans to cover recommended preventive services, including mammograms, colonoscopies, immunizations, and well-baby and well-child screenings without charging deductibles, co-payments, or co-insurance.
- Guarantees you the choice of any available primary care and pediatric doctors in your plan's network of providers. It also assures women the right to see an OB/GYN without having to obtain a referral first.
- Ensures coverage of services provided by an emergency room that is not in your network without prior approval or additional cost to you.

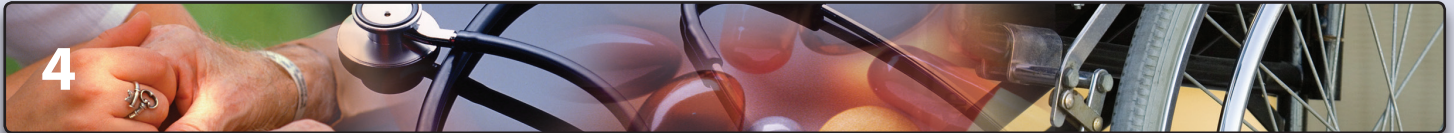


Lower Costs and Increased Coverage

Over the next few years, new policies to improve consumer options and generate cost savings will be implemented until the new health insurance marketplace is fully realized in 2014.

- Medicare recipients' guaranteed benefits are protected and strengthened under the new law. In 2010, roughly four million seniors on Medicare who fall in the Medicare Part D "donut hole" gap in prescription drug coverage will receive a one-time, tax-free \$250 rebate to help reduce drug costs - and in 2011, people who fall into the coverage gap will get a 50% discount on their covered brand name prescription drug costs.
- The law creates a new program – the Pre-Existing Condition Insurance Plan – to make health coverage available to you if you are uninsured, have been denied health insurance by insurance companies because of a pre-existing condition, and are otherwise eligible.
- The Early Retiree Reinsurance Program provides financial assistance to employers to continue employer-based health insurance for early retirees ages 55 to 64 who are not yet eligible for Medicare. This program is a bridge to 2014, when early retirees will be able to purchase affordable coverage in the new health insurance Exchanges, and is designed to lower the cost of premiums for all employees and reduce your health costs.
- Young adults are able to remain on their parents' health plan until they turn 26 if the plan covers dependent children and if coverage isn't offered to them through their job.
- The new law provides additional resources and authorities to health care and law enforcement officials to prevent fraud and abuse in Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and return more taxpayer dollars to the Medicare Trust Funds.
- If you own a small business, new tax credits could help lower premium costs. Starting in 2010, if you have fewer than 25 employees, pay average annual wages below \$50,000, and pay for most of your employees' health coverage, you may qualify for a small business tax credit of up to 35% of health expenses this year, to help offset the costs of covering your employees. In 2014, the credit will increase to 50% of health expenses.
- New funding is expanding and modernizing Community Health Centers across the country to serve up to 20 million more patients.
- The law requires insurance companies to publicly disclose and justify unreasonable premium increases.
- In 2011, insurance companies will be required to spend at least 80% of your premium dollars on health care and quality improvements instead of overhead, salaries, or administrative expenses – or provide rebates to consumers.
- In 2014, new tax credits will help middle class families afford health insurance. Medicaid will be extended to Americans with low incomes of up to \$14,000 for an individual or \$29,000 for a family of four in 2010 dollars.





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To learn more about the new benefits and cost savings available to you, please visit www.HealthCare.gov. A first-of-its-kind website, www.HealthCare.gov helps you make informed decisions about health care coverage by offering easy-to-understand information about what health plans are available in your state; how much they cost; what they cover, and lots more information tailored to your specific needs.

To learn more about the facts and upcoming benefits under the Affordable Care Act, log on to www.HealthCare.gov. Or follow us on Twitter at [@HealthCareGov](https://twitter.com/HealthCareGov).

